Offers for these blocks was announced on the 28th March, 2002 with the bid closing date of 28th August, 2002.

**Increase in prices of petrol and diesel**

91. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government announced a rise in the prices of petrol and diesel last month;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government have permitted the oil companies to revise the prices of petrol and diesel every fortnight and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether relief is proposed to be given to common man adversely affected by this burden of price hike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) to (c) With the dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism effective 1st April, 2002, the prices of petrol and diesel have become market-determined. Keeping in view the increase in the international oil prices, the oil companies decided to first increase the retail selling price of petrol and diesel by around Rs. 2.50 litre and Rs. 1.50 litre respectively from the midnight of 3rd/4th June 2002 and later, by around 25 paise per litre for each product with effect from 16th June 2002.

(d) With a view to contain the impact of the increase in international prices on the domestic consumer prices of petrol and diesel, the Government reduced the excise duty rates on these products by 2% with effect from the midnight of 3rd/4th June 2002.

**Maintenance of price of petro-products**

92. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state the steps taken to prevent hardship to the consumers of petro-products by maintaining price stability for the post administered pricing mechanism environment ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : With the dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism effective from 1st April 2002, the prices of all petroleum products, except for PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG, have become market-determined. Thus, variations in the international oil prices are likely to be reflected in the domestic prices of petroleum products.

However, with a view to contain the impact of the increase in the international oil prices on the consumer prices of petrol and diesel, the Government reduced the excise duty rates on petrol and diesel by 2% with effect from the midnight of 3rd/4th June 2002.

**Setting up of auto LPG dispensing stations**

93. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Petroleum Corporation has decided to set up 42 auto LPG dispensing stations in the country during 2002-2003;

(b) if so, whether out of this 16 would be set up in Delhi;

(c) the States where these auto LPG dispensing stations will be set up;

(d) whether any concrete programme of action is being proposed in setting up of these stations throughout the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) have the plan to set up 40 Auto LPG Dispensing Stations (ALDS) in the country including 15 in Delhi by the end of March, 2003.

(c) to (e) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have planned to set up 228 ALDS in the major cities across the country by the end of March, 2004. However, the commissioning of these ALDS also depends upon the market demand. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) would be setting up these ALDS in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.